

# THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO EGO-RESILIENCE: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY AMONG MIDDLE AGED ADULTS

THUSHARA MARIAM THOMAS

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**The Contributing Factors to Ego-Resilience: A Correlational Study  
Among Middle Aged Adults**

By

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# Message from the Desk of Editor

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It gives me great opportunity to present the forth volume of IJIP, the measure of progress. The concept of a Journal of Indian Psychology has been developing for over few years and finally another issue has come to fruition. From this edition we have ISSN for online 2348-5396 and print 2349-3429, ZDB-No.: 2775190-9, IDN: 1052425984, CODEN: IJIPD3, OCLC: 882110133, WorldCat Accession: (DE-600) ZDB2775190-9, ResearchID: P-8455-2015 in our publication. RedShine Publication, Inc is grateful to the contributors for making this Journal a reality.

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The Journal would publish peer-reviewed original research papers, case reports, systematic reviews and meta-analysis. Editorial, Guest Editorial, Viewpoint and letter to the editor are solicited by the editorial board. Large numbers of research papers were received from all over the globe for publication and we thank each one of the authors personally for soliciting the journal. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the reviewers and members of the editorial board who so carefully perused the papers and carried out justified evaluation. Based on their evaluation, we could accept some research papers for this issue across the disciplines. We are certain that these papers will provide qualitative information and thoughtful ideas to our accomplished readers. We thank all the readers profusely who conveyed their appreciation on the quality and content of the journal and expressed their best wishes for future issues. We convey our deep gratitude to the Editorial Board, Advisory Board and all office bearers who have made possible the publication of this journal in the planned time frame.



We humbly invite all the authors and their professional colleagues to submit their research papers for consideration for publication in our upcoming issues as per the “Scope and Guidelines to Authors” given at the website. Any comments and observations for the improvement of the journal are most welcome.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the contributing factors to ego-resilience among middle aged adults. The factors identified were spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism. The present study consisted of a sample size of 60 with 30 men and 30 women between 35 and 55 years of age selected through convenient and snowball sampling methods from Bangalore city. Standardized questionnaires were used to measure ego-resilience, spirituality, and locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism. Results were analyzed using the statistical tools of Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Multiple Regression Analysis, Independent Sample t-test and Thematic and Content Analysis. The analysis of results showed that there was no significant relationship between spirituality, locus of control and emotional intelligence and ego-resilience. Ego-resilience was found to have a significant relationship with positive emotions and optimism. It was also seen that there was no gender difference in ego-resilience. Regression analysis showed that positive emotions, negative emotions and optimism predict ego-resilience. Thematic and Content Analysis showed that the common coping strategy used was spirituality.

**Keywords:** *Contributing Factors, Ego-resilience, Middle Age*

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### *Resilience*

Every human strives to maximize his or her well-being. The term well-being includes experiences of happiness, appreciation of what one's life has provided and is a combination of positive affect and general life-satisfaction. A traumatic event, a setback, a threatening situation or any stressor can affect a person's well-being. Not every individual is able to cope well with such stressful events. Some are able to deal effectively while some may succumb to the pressure.

Psychological resilience has been characterized by the ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences and by flexible adaptation to the changing demands of stressful experiences (Block & Block 1980; Block & Kremen, 1996; Lazarus, 1993).

'Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress. It means bouncing back from difficult experiences' (American Psychological Association, 2014). Bonanno (2004) has defined resilience as "the ability of adults in otherwise normal circumstances who are exposed to an isolated and potentially highly disruptive event, such as the death of a close relation or a violent or life-threatening situation, to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning".

Research has shown that resilience is an ordinary phenomenon and not extraordinary. If a person is resilient it does not mean that he/she does not experience difficulty or distress. Resilience is something which appears to be universal. Masten (1990) states that there are two factors involved in resilience. For a judgment of resilience to be made, a person must face an important challenge or risk which has the capability to produce negative outcomes. The other factor involves the judgment of a favourable or good outcome.

Studies over 20 years show consistent results that most people are able to make a decent living even if they come from families with high stress levels. Previous research has studied resilience considering it as a process that is not static, which involves adapting to any form of stress in a successful manner. Hence resilience can be considered as a consequence of this adjustment. But not all of us have this ability to the same extent. People differ in their inner strength, flexibility and reserve capacity (Gallo, Bogart, Vranceanu and Matthews, 2005).

Polk (1997) came up with four patterns of resilience.

1. ***Dispositional Pattern-*** the dispositional patterns refer to the physical and ego-related psychosocial attributes that promote resilience. They refer to those aspects of the individual that helps him/her have a resilient approach to a stressor. It can include a sense of autonomy, self-worth, good physical health and good physical appearance.

2. **Relational pattern-** Relational pattern relates to the individual's part in the society and their relationship with the members of the society. These roles and relationships can be intimate or can be a part of a broader societal structure.
3. **Situational pattern-** the situational pattern links the individual and the stressful situation. It can include the individual's ability to solve problems, evaluate the situation and the concerned responses and the ability to act according to the situation.
4. **Philosophical pattern-** Philosophical pattern refers to the view of the world the individual has an ideal life. It includes the belief system held by the individual that promotes resilience. Some of them are that there is purpose in life, every situation or experience has a positive element in it and that developing self is of utmost importance.

Barnard (1994) has come up with some individual phenomena that research has shown to correlate with resilience:

1. Others perception of the individual to be loving during infancy and in later years.
2. Being the single child at least up to 20-24 months of the child's birth
3. An intelligence level which is high
4. Having the ability to form relationships that are intimate
5. Having a high level of achievement motive in school and around
6. Being able to form meaningfulness out of situations in one's life which increases the level of understanding of these situations
7. Ability to disengage from the household selectively and engage with the outside world and then reengage with family
8. Having an internal locus of control which gives the person internal orientation
9. Having an adolescence characterized by lack of grave illness.

Ryff (1989) and her colleagues came with a model of well-being. Research has shown that these factors are predictive of resilient responses. There are six dimensions which describe aspects of an individual's personality, self-concept, competence and social relationships that represent resources for effective living.

1. **Self-acceptance-** Self-accepting persons have a positive attitude towards themselves and are willing to accept all aspects of their self which includes both their strengths and their weaknesses. They have a positive feel about their life.
2. **Personal Growth-** it refers to a person's need to grow and develop. They are open to novel and new experiences and challenges. It is shown by people who have an excitement towards life and willing to learn new things.
3. **Purpose in life-** the person has certain goals and beliefs that directs their life.
4. **A person's life** can be meaningful because they have a satisfying job, have certain religious beliefs, dedication to some particular cause or even to people's requirements. If you have a purpose in life you feel like you are able to make an impact on the society which is positive in nature and your life has meaningfulness at a personal level.



5. ***Environmental mastery-*** it refers to a need to compete and being able to deal with our complex environment which makes up our fast moving lives. It is highlighted in a person's capacity to make a suitable living condition. It includes proper management of work, money, family, health and other requirements for living.
6. ***Autonomy-*** People who are autonomous do not have a problem with self-direction. They are able to take initiatives and work without the help of others. They have an internal level that controls their actions and allows them to avoid negative social pressures that come from others. You are autonomous when you are able to be yourself and follow the standards you have set for yourself.
7. ***Positive Relation with Others-*** people who have positive relations tend to be empathetic and intimate. They indulge in interactions that are pleasant, gratifying and trust-worthy.

### ***Ego-Resilience***

A longitudinal study on personality has given rise to a typological approach to resilience. The term 'ego-resilient' emerged and was used to describe those people who adjusted well and had good interpersonal skills. Klohn (1996) defines ego-resilience as a "personality resource that allows individuals to modify their characteristic level and habitual mode of expression of ego-control so as to most adaptively encounter, function in, and shape their immediate and long-term environmental contexts". He believes that there is a potent relationship between ego-resiliency and playing an effective role in various fields in life. Block and Block (1980) projected ego-resiliency as a personality construct which referred to the person's ability to adapt well in a flexible and resourceful manner to any internal or external stressor. People who are high in this construct are able to adjust better and have high personal attainments throughout life.

The concept of ego-resiliency was different from the view point of developmental understanding which explained resilience as the ability to bounce back during an unpleasant situation. According to Block (1993), Ego-resiliency is a meta-level personality trait. It is related to the concept of ego. The basic process that underlies it is the adaptability in controlling one's emotions. This ability to control emotions is a long lasting one. It is due to this ability to be flexible, that a person, who has a high level of resilience, is likely to feel positive emotions, have greater self-confidence and adjust psychologically when compared to those people who have a low level of resilience (Block & Kreman, 1996). When in a stressful situation those with a low level would not be able to deal with it effectively.

Block and Kreman (1996) have identified ego-resiliency as trait resilience, which is, an individual's capacity to self-regulate in an appropriate manner which is not static allowing those with high ego-resilience to adjust faster to changing situations. Considering resilience as a trait puts forward the idea that individuals differ in their ability to deal with a trauma or stressful situation. According to this, ego-resiliency would highlight individual differences that may be present even at the time when the individual is an infant. Ego-resiliency can be measured on a

continuum where ego-resilient people are better able to adapt to a novel or stressful situation while ego-brittle people have a low capacity to adapt well to such a situation.

Ego-brittleness places an individual at a risk of experiencing anxiety and also other negative effects. Ego-resilience helps an individual to become less affected by anxiety, to have a positive connection with the world which is shown through positive affect and openness to experience. An ego-brittle individual is susceptible to anxious feelings which can lead to chronic dysphasia. Therefore, positive and negative affect can be seen as consequences of ego-resiliency or ego-brittleness.

Research has found that strong attachment in childhood, empathetic behaviour of children towards friends, ability to solve preschool problems and delaying gratification in young children contribute to ego-resiliency in childhood. High drug use and symptoms of depression in adolescents can cause ego-brittleness. People who have high ego-resiliency tend to be more capable and comfortable in closer world of interpersonal relationships.

There are various factors that contribute to ego-resilience. They are the level of spiritual beliefs, locus of control orientation, use of positive emotions, being emotionally intelligent and being optimistic.

### ***Spirituality***

Most people believe in a divine force which controls. Some may consider that force as God while others may derive other forms of this divine force. People strive to find meaning in life and their purpose on earth. This striving is referred to as spirituality. It also connects an individual to the divine force present in the universe. ‘Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature and to the significant or sacred’. (University of Minnesota, 2013).

Some people consider spirituality to be connected to their religious beliefs. They may find solace in their close ties with God or a divine superior. There may be others who draw meaning in their life through their relatedness to nature or art. Research states that people who have a sceptic attitude too cannot disagree with the idea or belief of the existence of a superior power which is greater than the world we see around us.

Religion refers not only to the ‘sacred aspect’. It is not just a set of beliefs; it also involves how they are used to answer intense questions about life and in coping with many challenges in life. Spirituality plays a major role in coping with life stressors (Pargament et al. 1998). Research has found that people high on spirituality are more likely to possess an outlook that is more positive in nature and a better quality of life. They are more likely to adjust to life’s challenges with ease

and stay calm and composed when dealing with the problems. It can be seen that spirituality contributes to the ability to deal with challenges.

Many individuals experience inner feelings of spirituality. They are also aware of these feelings. It forms an integral part of their daily spiritual and religious lives. The search for the divine is capable of taking place anywhere and anytime. Spirituality is considered as a state of mind and it can be accessed universally. People may adopt various ways to discover, conserve and transform the sacred. Most religious leaders proclaim that religions are different ways to reach the same God. It is a positive state of mind that most people experience.

Baumeister (1991) states that there are four needs that underlie our pursuit of meaning in life. They are- purpose, value, self-efficacy and self-worth. Purpose refers to the need to have a direction in one's life. Value refers to the people's need to believe that their acts are right or good which is measured by a set of values. Self-efficacy is the need to have control over what happen in one's life so that life does not feel out of control or non-manageable. Self-worth is the need for self-esteem and positive self-evaluation. These four needs together gives a pathway of thought regarding the psychological foundations of meaningful life and the role of religion in dealing with people's ultimate worries.

### ***Locus of control***

Locus of control determines to what an individual attributes the happenings of their lives. 'Locus of control is a psychological concept that refers to how strongly people believe they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives' (The Glossary of Education, 2013). The concept of locus of control was derived from Bandura's Social Learning Theory.

The concept was given by Julian Rotter. Rotter came up with two loci- external and internal. He believed that causes or explanations for all behaviours and the personality type lies outside and inside the person in the form of external reinforcements and internal cognitive processes. People who possess an internal locus of control believe that the reinforces are caused by their own actions while those who have an external locus of control believe that reinforces are caused by other people, fate, God or luck. Locus of control plays an important role in our perception of the challenging situations. Locus of control was thought of a unidimensional construct by Rotter where he believed it can be measured on a continuum where those individuals who believe that their life is controlled by outside forces fall on one end and those who believe that they are the ones who control their lives fall on the other end. Levenson has come with three dimensions- powerful others, chance control and individual control.

Studies have found that men tend to possess an internal locus of control (Sherman et al. 1997). Another study found that women tend to possess an external locus of control (Moore 2007). But

other studies have found that gender difference is not so prominent (Kapalka and Lachenmeyer 1988).

### ***Positive Emotions***

Positive emotions are good for us all the time and not only when we are stressed. They help improve both physical and mental health. Their effects are beyond the unhealthy effects of negative emotions. Evolution and life situations and lessons have given us the ability to experience a wide range of emotions. Positive emotions together with negative emotions constitute the basic and primary component of one's emotional life. When a person makes use of positive emotions when dealing with a situation, the person will have a wider range of actions and thoughts to choose from than when the person uses negative emotions.

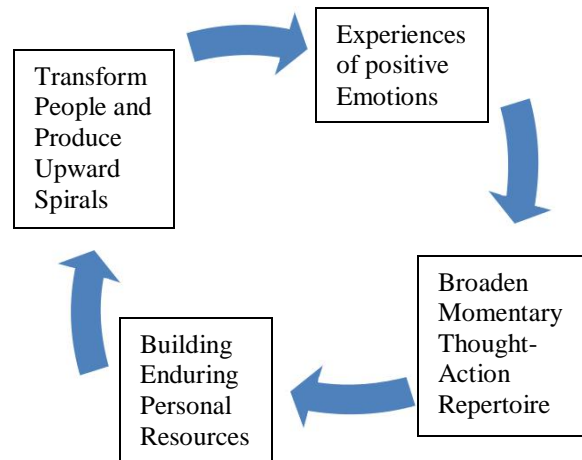
*'Positive emotions are evolved adaptations that function to build lasting resources'*

(Fredrickson, 1998). Positive affect refers to emotions such as cheerfulness, joy, contentment and happiness. Positive emotions helps in building resilience and our stress coping ability by reducing the effects caused by negative emotions which stress gives rise to. Fredrickson states that positive emotions help in increasing the well-being of the individual especially emotional well-being. Positive emotions also play a role in enhancing outlook.

The Broaden-and-Build theory of Positive Emotions given by Fredrickson states that positive emotions helps in improving our physical conditions which buffer against illness, improves our psychological conditions which buffer against or help us cope with stress and improves our social resources which refers mainly to social support which we receive from others which is important in dealing with almost all life challenges. During a challenging phase, positive emotions play an important role in keeping us calm and making us able to deal with the challenge. Hence, is being considered in this study. According to this theory, those who make use of positive emotions would have a broader transient thought-action stock.

Using positive emotions helps the individual indulge in a wide range of activities. Indulging in this wide range of activities helps the individual to form social, physical and intellectual resources. These resources help the individual to deal effectively when confronted by any stressor. This broader transient thought-action stock helps build resilience. Positive emotionality is an important aspect of resilience. Positive emotionality can be built using humour, relaxation techniques and optimism.

### ***The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions***



### ***Emotional Intelligence***

Our emotions play an important role in a stressful situation. It can give us strength to deal with the problem or it can also boggle us down. Emotional intelligence helps us reason out our emotions and this in turn impacts our thinking styles. ‘Emotional intelligence is the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions’ (Mayer and Salovey, 1990).

Emotional intelligence can be understood as our capacity to understand, control and judge emotions. Emotional intelligence helps us understand emotions better. It includes our capacity to approach and produce emotions which helps our thought processes. Emotional intelligence describes other traits such as empathy, emotional expression, adaptability and self-control.

Mayer and Salovey have come up with a model which states that there are four factors of emotional intelligence.

- a. Perception of emotions- to understand emotions we need to perceive them accurately it also involves understanding body language and facial expressions.
- b. Reasoning with emotions- using emotions to help us think and influence our cognitive ability.
- c. Understanding emotions- the emotions we perceive has a wide variety of meaning. We need to observe them and draw meanings and understand them.
- d. Managing emotions- to manage emotions, to respond as needed and responding to others emotions is all part of it.

There are two constructs of emotional intelligence. Trait emotional intelligence is related to the self-perception of emotions while ability construct is related to cognitive abilities related to

emotions. Trait emotional intelligence is defined as a constellation of self - perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007 ), whereas ability emotional intelligence is defined as “ the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others ” Both trait and ability constructs are different from each other distinctly and hence correlate inversely.

### ***Optimism***

Optimism reflects the individuals’ expectations of not having a negative outcome in most situations. ‘Optimism is the global generalized tendency to believe that one will generally experience good versus bad outcomes in life’ (Scheier and Carver, 1992).

Optimism generally means taking a positive outlook to life, using what is available. It also involves having a positive expectation for the future. Optimists believe that they will be able to fulfil their goals. Research has found that people who are high on resilience have high optimism, tend to be zestful and have an approach to life which is energetic.

Scheier and Carver have come up with self-regulation model where they state that the expectations and level of confidence that people possess plays an important role in the way they cope with life’s challenges and face obstacles which hinders them from achieving their goals. Optimists tend to feel lower levels of distress. And it also helps overcome various stressors. Optimism is expectancy that one will be able to achieve favourable results in one’s life. It enhances our well-being, helps us cope with our stress in a better way and helps in self-regulation.

Optimism helps people to make goals and commitments, deal effectively with any stressor any other pain-inducing things and bounce back from any trauma or stress. Optimism has an impact on our physical and psychological states. This helps achieve success in various fields such as academics, sports, politics and work. On the same note, pessimism is believed to cause failure, indifference, and social alienation and when it becomes extreme it can cause depression and ultimately death.

### ***Middle adulthood***

Middle age was an aspect of life span development which was not given importance until recently. It was so because it wasn’t considered as important as the young age or old age. As the life has become more fast moving people have become more work oriented. This has led to postponing child birth. It is due to these factors that middle age has gained prominence in recent times. The upper caste Hindus in certain rural parts in India do not take into consideration the existence of a middle phase in adulthood occurring between young adulthood and old age.

According to Erikson, the middle adulthood ranges from the years 35-55. He says that people in this age group tend to develop concern over building, mentoring and having an impact over the next generation which he calls generativity. If this does not occur they tend to stagnate. Middle adulthood can be considered as the time period when there is the onset of physical and other deterioration. Some common problems include gradual loss of sight and hearing capacity and decrease in basal metabolism. Other common health problems are hypertension and diabetes. The most important occurrence among women is menopause.

There are certain psychological stressors common to the middle age. They include burnout, midlife crisis, empty nest, filial crisis, caregiver burnout and being part of sandwich generation. Burnout is considered as emotional exhaustion accompanied by a feeling that one cannot accomplish anything more. Midlife crisis refers to a period of heightened stress which is caused due to the review and revaluation of one's life.

Midlife crisis can be considered as identity crisis. According to Elliott Jacques, this crisis is caused by mortality awareness. They may feel loss of youth and realize that they must act quickly if they want to accomplish something. Empty nest is a phase caused by the leaving of the last child. Middle aged adults when become squeezed between the need to raise children and to look after aging parents are called sandwich generation. Prolonged care giving to elderly parents can produce caregiver burnout among the middle aged adults.

### ***Purpose of your study***

The purpose of this study is to find out if there is a significant relationship between ego-resilience and spirituality, ego-resilience and locus of control, ego-resilience and positive emotions, ego-resilience and emotional intelligence and ego-resilience and optimism. The study also tries to find out if spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predict ego-resilience. The study aims to find out if there are gender differences with respect to ego-resilience and if there are other factors contributing to ego-resilience.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This study titled ‘The contributing factors to Ego-Resilience: a correlational study among middle aged adults’ aims to find out the influence of factors such as Spirituality, Locus of Control, Positive Emotions, Emotional Intelligence and Optimism on Ego-Resilience.

Review of Literature plays an important in research as it gives the researcher an idea as to where this particular study can be a part in the complete framework of earlier research. It becomes important especially when earlier research has mistakes or when the current research is being done on a different set or people.

In this study the Review of Literature is divided based on the variables used in the research. They are:

1. Resilience/Ego-Resilience and Spirituality
2. Resilience/Ego-Resilience and Locus of Control
3. Resilience/Ego-Resilience and Positive Emotions
4. Resilience/Ego-Resilience and Emotional Intelligence
5. Resilience/Ego-Resilience and Optimism

### ***2.1 Resilience/Ego-Resilience***

A longitudinal study was conducted by Block (1993) to assess individuals ego-control and ego-resiliency. Initially, there were 130 participants present when the study began in 1969 and the participants were in nursery school. By the time the study was completed there were 104 participants. The ego-control and ego-resilience of the participants was assessed when they were aged 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 14, 18 and 23. It was assessed through experimental measures, interactional procedures, self-evaluations, tests of creativity and clinical interviews. The study found that the ego-resilience of boys remained consistent over time. For girls the scores were consistent during early childhood and adolescence. Ego-control remained consistent for both boys and girls.

A study was conducted by Taylor, Eisenberg, Spinrad and Widaman (2013) to find out the effect of intrusive parenting and effortful control on ego-resiliency. Longitudinal relations of these were measured at the age of 18, 30 and 42 months. The sample size was 256, 230 and 210 respectively. It was assessed using structure equation modeling. Invasive parenting was able to predict ego-control negatively a year later. Effortful control at 30 months acted as a mediator for the negative relations between the invasive parenting style at 18 months and the ego-resilience at 42 months when it tried to stabilize the variables. Ego-resilience cannot foretell effortful control. The research found that invasive parenting style will have a negative effect on ego-resilience through its effects on the child’s capacity to control its attention and behaviour.



A study was conducted by Southwick, Vythilingam and Charney (2005) to find out the neurobiological and psychological factors that are responsible for depression caused by stress and it was compared to those factors that are believed to lead to stress resilience. Neurobiological factors that were considered for this study included serotonin, polymorphisms of the 5-HT transporter gene, norepinephrine, alpha-2 adrenergic receptors, neuropeptide Y, polymorphisms of the alpha-2 adrenergic gene, dopamine, corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), cortisol, and CRH receptors. These factors are said to be present in the brain regions involved in stress, depression and resilience. The psychosocial factors that were considered in this study were positive emotions and optimism, humour, cognitive flexibility, cognitive explanatory style and reappraisal, acceptance, religion/spirituality, altruism, social support, role models, coping style, exercise, capacity to recover from negative events, and stress inoculation. The study found that any antidepressant which affects serotonin, relaxation techniques, cognitive behavioural therapies, optimism, hope, humour, positive emotions, spirituality, social support and using an active coping style would help increase resilience. And these psychosocial and neurobiological factors work together and influence resilience factors.

A study was conducted by Smeekens, Riksen-Walraven and Bakel (2007) to find the cortisol levels produced during parent-child communication among 5-year-olds and to find out the mitigating effect of ego-resiliency. The research was done to find out if the communication between parent and child was of low quality would it lead to physiological stress in children. The hypothesis adopted stated that children with low ego-resilience would have high level of cortisol when they had low quality communication. The sample was 101 children. The kind of communication the parents and child had was noted. The parents and children discussed previous emotional experiences. The cortisol levels were measured by taking saliva samples before and 20 minutes after the communications. The tool used to assess ego-resiliency was California Child Q-set. Principal component analysis was done and was found that negative communications would increase the cortisol levels. Children with low ego-resilience had high cortisol levels.

These studies show that ego-resilience of boys remain constant throughout while that of girls are consistent only during early childhood and adolescence, intrusive parenting style can have a negative effect on ego-resilience, antidepressants that affect serotonin, relaxation techniques, cognitive behavioural therapies and positive emotions increases resilience.

### ***Resilience/Ego Resilience and Spirituality***

A study was conducted by Gnanprakash (2013) which aimed to find out the relationship between stress coping ability and spirituality. The study was conducted on 100 post-graduate students (50 boys and 50 girls). The sampling technique used was that of random sampling. The hypotheses adopted by this study included (a) There is a significant relationship between spirituality and stress coping ability. (b) There is a significant difference between men and women with regard to

spirituality. (c) There is a significant difference between men and women with regard to stress-coping ability. This study found that those who got a higher score in spirituality had more capability to cope with their stress and were more likely to adopt a positive outlook towards their stressors.

A study was conducted by Womble, Labbe, and Cochran (2013) on 83 college students. The subjects answered a Demographic Questionnaire, NEO-5 Personality Questionnaire and Resilience Questionnaire. It was found that health resilience was related to four variables of the NEO-5 inventory and spirituality score. Health resilience had a positive correlation with extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness and spirituality and had a negative correlation with neuroticism. The study gave further support to the idea that spirituality and health protective personality characteristics increases health resilience.

A study was conducted by Brelsford and Ciarrocchi (2011) to find out the effect of spiritual disclosure on resilience. It was conducted on a sample of 318 adults where spiritual discourse was given. The subjects were required to answer Ego-Resiliency Scale, Spiritual Disclosure Scale, Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness and Spirituality Scale, International Personality Item Pool, Interpersonal Support Evaluation List and The Positive and Negative Schedule. The study found that religious practices and spiritual disclosure contributed to resilience and positive emotions and social connectedness gave an added advantage.

From these studies it can be seen that those who scored high in spirituality had more capability to cope with their stress, spirituality and health protective personality characteristics increases health resilience and religious practices and spiritual disclosure contributed to resilience.

### ***Resilience/Ego Resilience and Locus of Control***

A study was done by Baron, Eisman, Scuello and Veyzar (1996) on two hundred and eight children whose parents had survived the holocaust experience and seventy children whose parents had escaped this experience. They were assessed for their locus of control, religious beliefs and stress resilience. The study found that children of survivors were less resilient to stress and had lower spiritual beliefs. There was no difference in locus of control among both the groups.

A study was conducted by Asberg and Renk (2014) which aimed to find out the relationship between level of stress perception, external locus of control, adequacy of social support and other factors contributing to psychological functioning. The study found that those who perceived a greater level of stress, more external orientation and got a lower level of social support were more prone to have depression, hopelessness and lower self-esteem. A regression analysis was conducted which found that stress and social support played an important role in determining the level of depression and anxiety.

A study was conducted by Sandler and Lakey (1982) on 93 undergraduate students. They were required to complete a recent life event schedule which assesses the level of social support received, Beck depression inventory and State-Trait anxiety inventory. The subjects were divided into two groups-those with internal or external locus of control. The correlation between anxiety and negative events was more in those who had an external orientation. The study found that locus of control was a main determiner of the level of social support received. The effect of social support as a way to reduce stress was given only for internals and not externals.

A study was conducted by Lefcourt, Martin and Saleh (1984) which aimed to find out the role of locus of control and social support as moderators of stress. It included 3 experiments and 211 subjects who were undergraduates took part. This study found that people who had an internal locus of control received more social support than those with external orientation. The effect of reducing stress by social support was obtained by people those who were more independent.

These studies have shown that there is no difference in locus of control between the group that has experienced stress and the group that hasn't experienced, external orientation is responsible for depression, hopelessness and low self-esteem, locus of control was an important determiner of the level of social support experienced.

### ***Resilience/Ego Resilience and positive emotions***

A study was conducted by Ong, Bergeman, Bisconti and Wallace (2006). The study aimed to find out the role of resilience and positive emotions as predictors of successful adaptation to stress in later life. The experimenters conducted 3 studies to understand the functions played by resilience and positive emotions in the process of stress. Study 1 had two parts and both aimed to find out various stressors which were naturally occurring. Study 2 was conducted on a group of widows who bereaved recently. Multilevel random coefficient modelling analyses across studies showed that positive emotions which occurs on a daily basis helps to reduce stress reactivity and helps in recovering from the stressful event. The study found that variations in the level of resilience were responsible for fluctuations in the levels of emotions which occurred as reactions to the stressors. When the level of resilience was high the association between positive and negative emotions was weaker, especially on days when stress was high. The study also found that a positive emotion helps people who have high resiliency to overcome from daily stress efficiently.

A study was conducted by Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) which aimed to find out the relationship between resilience and positive emotions. The research employed a multimethod approach. The research made use of 3 studies. The first two studies used psycho physiological data to find out the body parts involved in resilience (Study 1) and to understand what positive appraisals and positive emotions would do in controlling physiological arousal involved in stress (Study 2). Study 3 used stressors that are naturally occurring to know further about how positive

emotions is useful in the process of coping by finding out its relations to coming up positive meaning in negative happenings. The tools used were Ego-Resiliency Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule and Moos's (1988) Coping Responses Inventory. Study 1 found that positive emotions and cognitive appraisals helped resilient people to overcome from negative emotional arousal and Study 2 found that people with low resilience can benefit from positive emotions. Study 3 found the importance of writing down one's problems in helping one to find positive meaning in the problems faced.

A study was conducted by Tugade, Fredrickson and Barrett (2004) to find out the role of positive emotional granularity on resilience, the role of positive emotions in helping in coping and health. The research made use of 2 studies. Study 1 concentrated on positive emotions and resilience. It was conducted on 57 subjects. Their cardiovascular readings were taken. The tools used were Ego-Resilience Scale and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. The subjects were asked to prepare a speech which was stress inducing. The study found that Trait resilience was positively associated with positive mood as assessed by the PANAS. It was also found that high trait resilience was associated with more happiness. Study 2 aimed to find the relationship between Positive Emotional Granularity and Coping. 130 subjects took part in an experience sampling procedure, completed a coping strategies questionnaire and Rational Experiential Inventory. The study found that positive emotional granularity was negatively correlated with scores on the COPE mental self-distraction scale which suggests less cognitive diversion.

A study was conducted by Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels and Conway (2009) to find out if positive emotions increased life satisfaction by increasing resilience. The research was based on the broaden-and-build theory which states that happiness can lead us to experience advantageous outcomes in various aspects of life. The theory states that this is due to the role played by positive emotions in creating resources which are lasting. The researchers assessed emotions of 86 participants for one month. Life satisfaction and trait resilience was measured before and after the end of one month. It was found that a positive emotion was an important predictor of resilience and life satisfaction. Negative emotions had no effects and did not interrupt the advantages created by positive emotions. Positive emotions also acted as a mediator between the initial resilience and end resilience. It was suggested that it was immediate emotions and not normal positive assessment one's life, that connects happiness and advantageous life consequences. It was found that people who are happy people are more satisfied as they have developed assets for living well.

From these studies it can be seen that positive emotions helps people who have high resiliency to overcome from daily stress efficiently, people with low resilience can benefit from positive emotions, the importance of writing down one's problems in helping one to find positive meaning in the problems faced, positive emotional granularity was negatively correlated with

scores on the COPE mental self-distraction scale and that happy people are more satisfied as they have developed assets for living well.

### ***Resilience/Ego Resilience and emotional intelligence***

A study was conducted by Schneider, Lyons and Khazon (2013) which aimed to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress process. The study was done on 126 participants who were asked to complete an ability based emotional intelligence test after which they were exposed to two stressors. The way the participants appraised the level of stress and nature of stressors, their emotional levels and physiological responses to stress were assessed over time. It was hypothesized that high level of emotional intelligence would facilitate stress responses in the direction of challenge rather than threat. The study found that higher level of emotional intelligence was related to lower appraisals of threat, less decline in positive affect, lower negative affect and physiological responses that point to perceiving stress as a challenge. But the finding was different for men and women. However this study provided predictive validity that emotional intelligence helps stress resilience. As seen from the study, emotional intelligence plays an important role in bouncing back.

A study was conducted by Shin and Park (2013) to assess emotional intelligence, ego resilience and stress in clinical practice of nursing students. It was conducted on 588 students. The data analysis was done using descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA and Pearson correlation coefficients. The results stated that emotional intelligence was different at a significant level based on gender, level of satisfaction of having nursing as a major and the level of satisfaction in clinical field. Ego-resilience was different at a significant level based on the levels of satisfaction experienced from having nursing as a major and working in a clinical field. Stress was different at a significant level based on gender, time length of working in a clinical setting, level of satisfaction of having nursing as a major, level of satisfaction of working in a clinical setting, simulation practice and main tutor in clinical setting. There was significant correlation between emotional intelligence, ego-resilience and stress in a clinical setting. This showed that it was required to increase emotional intelligence and ego-resilience so that the level of stress in clinical setting can be reduced.

From these studies it can be seen that emotional intelligence plays an important role in bouncing back and it was required to increase emotional intelligence and ego-resilience so that the level of stress in clinical setting can be reduced.

### ***Resilience/Ego Resilience and Optimism***

A study was conducted by Deist & Greeff (2015) which aimed to find out the factors which contributed to resilience among caregivers of dementia patients. This study employed a mixed-method approach. It made use of convenience sampling technique to access the spouses of dementia patients who were care givers. This study was conducted in South Africa. The sample

size was 44. The data was analysed using Analysis of Variance, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. The study found a list of factors which contributed to resilience. They were social support, positive communication patterns, acceptance, optimism, family hardiness, family connectedness and effective management of symptoms.

A study was conducted by Besser, Weinber, Zeigler-Hill and Neria (2014). The study aimed to find the role of intrapersonal and interpersonal sources of resilience in acute symptoms of posttraumatic stress and dissociative experiences among female Israeli civilians exposed to war. Intrapersonal sources include hope, optimism and self-esteem while the interpersonal sources include perceived social support from family, friends and other significant people. The literature reviews considered by these researchers had found that these factors had played an important role in adjusting to any stressors. The study included a nonclinical sample of 140 women during missile attacks in the Middle East in 2012. The study found that these sources lessen the risk for acute anxiety symptoms when people are exposed to any traumatic event.

A study was conducted by Utsey, Hook, Fischer and Belvet (2008) to assess cultural orientation, ego-resilience and optimism as predictors of subjective well-being among African Americans. The study was involved in testing a part of a model created by Constantine and Sue (2006). The model tried to find out if particular attitudes, beliefs and behaviours associated with the cultural orientation and perspectives of African Americans would anticipate ego-resilience, optimism and subjective well-being. The study was done on a sample of 215 students. The study made use of structural equation modelling. It was found that religious beliefs and pride in race could anticipate psychological functioning and well-being positively. Present time orientation anticipated psychological functioning well-being in a negative manner.

From these studies it can be seen that the factors that contribute to resilience are social support, positive communication patterns, acceptance, optimism, family hardiness, family connectedness and effective management of symptoms. Intrapersonal sources which include hope optimism and self-esteem while the interpersonal sources which include perceived social support from family, friends and other significant people also contribute to resilience and pride in race could anticipate psychological functioning and well-being positively. From the above mentioned studies it can be assumed that Spirituality, Locus of Control, Positive Emotions, Emotional Intelligence and Optimism are important determiners of Resilience.

### ***Need for the study***

Middle age is characterized by the onset of various physical illness. The most common ones seen in this age is diabetes and hypertension. They also face gradual loss of eye sight and hearing ability. Psychological tensions like loss of youth, burnout, empty-nest syndrome and mid-life crisis are other problems faced by those in the middle age. Women face an important turning point-menopause during this stage and it can be overwhelming as it marks the end of fertility.

Individuals who have young children may undergo stress as the burden of taking care of the children may seep into their minds. The end of middle age may mark the beginning of retired life. The loss of financial stability can be another point of concern. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that help cope with these problems.

Ego-resilience is an important factor in coping with stressful events. In the researcher's attempt to find previous researches done in this field few studies which were undertaken to understand the factors contributing to ego-resilience in the Indian scenario was found. It is important to have studies done specific to the Indian culture, which can take into considerations the socio-cultural factors which can influence ego-resilience.

Locus of control determines which orientation the individual would make use when confronting a stressful event. Locus of control can also play an important role in the type of attribution the individual is likely to make during a threat. It also influences the type of coping methods an individual would make use of at the point of a setback. There are very few studies which aim to understand the locus of control orientation which influences ego-resilience.

Most studies have tried to understand the role of ego-resilience among traumatized population underestimating the role of ego-resilience in adapting to problems among the general population.

Middle adulthood can be a turning point in some people's life. Most studies have focused on the younger generation, adolescents and the old aged while there are very few studies which try to understand ego-resilience among the middle aged. It is important to know if there are any particular factors which can impact the level of resilience among this age group.

Restored resilience refers to the type of resilience that is learnt. Various techniques which can help improve resilience can be taught as well. These techniques can help one deal with past, present or future trauma. The findings from this study can be used to develop a training module which can help improve resilience for the middle aged.

The brain's right hemisphere is the part involved in creativity, emotional expression, and joy, and optimism, sense of connection, spontaneity and enthusiasm. Resiliency training programs help restores the right brain. This improves the above mentioned aspect which in turn helps in building resiliency.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The current study is being conducted to find out the factors contributing to ego-resilience among the middle aged.

### ***Research topic***

‘The contributing factors to Ego-Resilience: a correlational study among middle aged adults’

### ***Aim of the research***

To assess the relationship between spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism and ego-resilience among middle aged, to assess gender differences in ego-resilience and to assess the other factors contributing to ego-resilience.

### ***Research questions***

- Is there a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience?
- Is there a relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience?
- Is there a relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience?
- Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience?
- Is there a relationship between optimism and ego-resilience?
- Does spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predict ego-resilience?
- Is there gender difference in ego-resilience?
- Which are the factors contributing to ego-resilience?

### ***Objectives***

- To study the relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between optimism and ego-resilience.
- To study spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism as predictors of ego-resilience.
- To study gender difference in ego-resilience.
- To study the factors contributing to ego-resilience.

### ***Hypotheses***

1. There is a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.
2. There is a relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience.
3. There is a relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience.
4. There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience.



5. There is a relationship between optimism and ego-resilience.
6. Spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predicts ego-resilience.
7. There is gender difference in ego-resilience.

### ***Operational definitions***

***Resilience***– ‘the process of, the capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances’ (Masten, Best and Garmezy, 1990).

***Ego-Resilience***- ‘personality resource that allows individuals to modify their characteristic level and habitual mode of expression of ego-control so as to most adaptively encounter, function in, and shape their immediate and long-term environmental contexts’ (Klohn, 1996)

***Spirituality***- ‘ is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature and to the significant or sacred’ ( University of Minnesota, 2013)

***Locus of control***- ‘is a psychological concept that refers to how strongly people believe they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives’  
(The Glossary of Education, 2013)

***Positive emotions***- ‘are evolved adaptations that function to build lasting resources’  
(Fredrickson, 1998; Fredrickson & Cohn, 2008)

***Emotional intelligence***- ‘the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide’s one thinking and actions’ (Mayer and Salovey,1990)

***Optimism***- 'the global generalized tendency to believe that one will generally experience good versus bad outcomes in life.' (Scheier and Carver, 1992)

### ***Variables***

Predictor variables-

1. Spirituality
2. Locus of control
3. Positive emotions
4. Emotional intelligence
5. Optimism
6. Gender

***Criterion variable-***

Ego-Resilience

***Research design***

A quantitative and a qualitative research design. This research design helps in generating data which helps understand the factors that contribute to ego-resilience. The quantitative part of the design helps verify already proven factors while the qualitative part gives an in-depth data which helps understand other factors contributing to ego-resilience.

***Sample***

The sample size is 60 which consists of 30 men and 30 women in the age group of 35-55. The Sampling techniques adopted are that of Convenient and Snowball sampling technique.

***Inclusion criteria***

- a. age-35-55 (based on Erickson's theory)
- b. Urban population residing in Bangalore
- c. Participants who are able to understand and converse in English (For phase 2, 5 men and 5 women with high ego-resilience score)

***Exclusion criteria***

People with any known psychiatric problem or mental disorders

***Procedure***

Before starting the data collection good rapport has to be established. This ensures that the subject is able to answer the questions honestly. Once rapport has been built, the next step is to hand over Consent Form and Demographic details Sheet. After collecting the demographic details of the subject the assessment tools are given to the subject.

*The assessment will be conducted in two phases.*

**Phase 1:** The sample chosen for the assessment (30 men and 30 women) are given the Ego-Resilience Scale. Once the subject finishes answering all the questions the questionnaire is collected back and the responses are scored according to the norms. A five minutes rest pause is given. The subjects are then given the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale. The answers are scored according to the norms. A five minutes rest pause is given. The subjects are then given the Locus of Control Scale. The answers are scored according to the norms. A five minutes rest pause is given. The subjects are then given the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. The answers are scored according to the norms. A five minutes rest pause is given. The subjects are given Emotional Intelligence Scale. The answers are scored and interpreted using the norms. A five minutes rest pause is given. The subjects are given Optimism Scale. The answers are scored

using the norms. The experimenter has to ensure that a rest pause of five minutes is given between the administrations of each of the scales to avoid fatigue.

**Phase 2:** For this, 10 subjects from the chosen sample who have a high ego-resilience score (5 men and 5 women) are selected based on convenient sampling. An open ended questionnaire is given to assess other factors contributing to high ego-resilience.

### ***Assessment Tools***

(i) Demographic Sheet (APPENDIX 1 )

This section contains all the personal details of the respondent.

(ii) Ego-Resilience Scale by Block and Kremen (1996) (APPENDIX 2) Description – This is a 14 items questionnaire. The subject is required to indicate the answer by marking one of the 4 options provided -Doesn't apply at all, applies slightly, applies somewhat or applies very strongly. The scoring is 1,2,3,4 respectively. The scores indicate 47-56- very high resiliency, 35-46- high resiliency, 23-34- undetermined trait, 11-22- low resiliency and 0-10 very low resiliency.

Reliability- a. Internal consistency -Cronbach alpha coefficient for the original sample was 0.76. b. test-retest- across five years between assessment the test-retest stability was 0.67 and 0.51 for women and men respectively

Validity- a. convergent/ concurrent- the correlation between Brief Resilience Scale and Ego Resilience Scale is 0.51. b. Divergent/Discriminant- there was a negative correlation of -0.37 was found between the Ego-Resilience Scale and Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (Emotional Reactivity Factor)

(iii) Daily Spiritual Experience Scale by Underwood and Teresi (2002) (APPENDIX 3)

Description- this is a 16 items questionnaire. The subject is required to indicate the answer by marking one of the 6 options provided- Many times a day, every day, most days, and some days, once in a while or never or almost never. The scoring is 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6 respectively. The last question has only 4 options -Not close, somewhat close, very close or as close as possible. The scoring is 1,2,3 and 4 respectively.

Reliability- Cronbach's alpha score of 0.89. Test-retest – Pearson correlation of 0.85.

(iv) Locus of Control Scale by Levenson (1981) (APPENDIX 4)

Description – This is a 24 items questionnaire -8 each for powerful others, chance control and individual control. The subject is required to indicate the answer by marking one of the 5 options provided -Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree. The scoring is 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

Reliability- a. Split-half- 0.72 for powerful others, 0.79 for chance control and 0.65 for individual control. b. test-retest- correlation coefficient was 0.76

Validity- this scale was correlated with Rotter's Locus of control scale and the correlation coefficient was 0.54

(v) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule by Watson et al., (1988) (APPENDIX 5)

Description- This scale consists of 20 words that describe feelings and emotions. The subject has to indicate the extent to which they feel the emotion by marking any of the 5 options very slightly or not at all, a little, moderately, quite a bit or extremely. The scoring is 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively. The statements are separate for positive and negative affect.

Positive Affect Score: Add the scores on items 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 19. Scores can range from 10 – 50, with higher scores representing higher levels of positive affect.

Mean Scores: Momentary - 29.7 Negative Affect Score: Add the scores on items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 20. Scores can range from 10 – 50, with lower scores representing lower levels of negative affect. Mean Score: Momentary -14.8 Reliability- Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.86-0.90 for positive affect and 0.84-0.87 for negative affect. Test-retest reliability was 0.47-0.68 for positive affect and 0.39-0.71 for negative affect

- (vi) Emotional intelligence scale by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, & Dornheim (1998) (APPENDIX 6)

Description- This scale consists of 33 items. The subject has to indicate the answer by marking any of the 5 options -strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree or agree, agree or strongly agree. The scoring is 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively. This test assesses Emotional Intelligence using four sub-scales: emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self-relevant emotions and managing others' emotions.

Reliability- the scale has a reliability score of 0.90

- (vii) Optimism Scale by Seligman (1990) (APPENDIX 7)

Description – This scale consists of 48 statements where the subject has to choose either of the two options given. The scores are separately added under the categories of Permanent Bad, Permanent Good, Pervasiveness Bad, Pervasiveness Good, Personalization Bad and Personalization Good. The 3 Bad scores and 3 Good scores are added separately to give the total optimism score (good-bad).

- (viii) Open ended questionnaire (developed by the researcher) (APPENDIX 8)

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Quantitative Analysis:**

##### *Descriptive Statistics*

1. Frequency

##### *Inferential Statistics*

1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation
2. Regression Analysis
3. Independent Sample t-test

#### **Qualitative Analysis**

1. Thematic and Content Analysis

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current study is titled ‘The contributing factors to Ego-Resilience: a correlational study among middle aged adults’. This study was conducted to find out the various factors that contribute to ego-resilience. The study was conducted on 30 women and 30 men in the age group of 35 - 55. They are tested through two phases- a quantitative phase and a qualitative phase. The following chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. The objectives of this study are

- To study the relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience.
- To study the relationship between optimism and ego-resilience.
- To study spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism as predictors of ego-resilience.
- To study gender difference in ego-resilience.
- To study the factors contributing to ego-resilience.

*The hypotheses set for the above objectives are*

- I. There is a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.
- II. There is a relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience .
- III. (There is a relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience.
- IV. There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience.
- V. There is a relationship between optimism and ego-resilience.
- VI. Spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predicts ego-resilience.
- VII. There is gender difference in ego-resilience.

The results and discussion for the following study have been divided into the following sections-

### **Section 4.I-** Results and discussion using descriptive statistics



Sub section 4.I.A- presents the sample characteristics using frequency and percentage

### **Section 4.II-** Results and discussion using inferential statistics.

In this section, the results and discussion connected to the testing of the hypotheses using inferential statistics have been presented.

- Sub section 4.II.A- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 1
- Sub section 4.II.B- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 2
- Sub section 4.II.C- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 3
- Sub section 4.II.D- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 4

- Sub section 4.II.E- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 5
- Sub section 4.II.F- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 6
- Sub section 4.II.G- Deals with testing of Hypothesis 7
- Sub section 4.II.H- Deals with Objective 8

## SECTION 4.I ANALYSIS USING DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In this section, descriptive statistics have been utilized to understand the characteristics of the sample.

**Sub section 4.I.A-** In this section, the sample has been described according to the characteristics they possess with regard to gender, number of children, occupation and health issues.

***Table 4.1: Showing the break-up of the sample according to gender, number of children, occupation and health issues-***

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
	<b>Gender</b>	
Male	30	50%
Female	30	50%
	<b>Number of children</b>	
One child	15	25%
Two children	39	65%
Three children and above	6	10%
	<b>Occupation</b>	
Non employed	21	35%
Employee	29	48.3%
Self employed	10	16.7%
	<b>Health issues</b>	
Has health issues	23	38.3%
No health issues	37	61.7%

Table 4.1 shows the number and percentage of the sample. From the table, it can be seen that there were 30 men and 30 women respondents. As the number is equal the percentage of respondents is 50% men and 50% women. From the table, it can be seen that 15 respondents have one child, 39 respondents have two children and 6 respondents have more than 3 children. Therefore, 25% of the respondents have one child, 65% have two children and 10% have more than three children. From the table, it can be seen that 21 respondents are non-employed, 29 respondents are employees and 10 respondents are self-employed. Therefore, 35% are non-employed, 48.3% are employees and 16.7% are self-employed. From the table, it can be seen that 23 respondents have any health issues and 37 respondents do not have any health issues. Therefore, 38.3% have health issues and 61.7% do not have any health issues.

## SECTION 4.II ANALYSIS USING INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

In this section, the results and discussion connected to the testing of the hypotheses using inferential statistics have been presented.

To analyze the hypotheses set for the study, the technique of correlation is being used.

### PEARSON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION

Correlation is a statistical method which helps find out the relationship of one variable to another variable. A correlational study is undertaken when one cannot experimentally manipulate the data. For example, to find the relationship between TV watching and paranoia. A correlational study can be used to find out the relationship between the two, if the two increase together. There are two types of correlation. Positive correlation is a type of correlation where increase in one variable is associated with the increase in another variable. Negative correlation is a type of correlation where increase in one variable is associated with the decrease in another variable. Correlation coefficient is a mathematical index which shows the type or the direction and magnitude of the relationship or association between two variables.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation is a statistical tool which is made use to measure the relationship between two variables when they are linear. The correlation between the two variables is presented using Pearson's ' $r$ '. The value of Pearson's ' $r$ ' can extend from -1 (depicting perfect negative relationship) to +1 (depicting perfect positive relationship).

In this study, correlation is used to find out the relationship between ego-resilience and spirituality, locus of control, positive affect, emotional intelligence and optimism.

**Section 4.II.A:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 1 which states that 'There is a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience'. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

***Table 4.2: Showing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation results between spirituality and ego-resilience***

	Number (N)	r value	Significance
Spirituality and	60	-0.070	0.598 <sup>n.s</sup>
Ego-Resilience			

<sup>n.s</sup> – Not Significant

Table 4.2 shows Pearson Correlation value which is -0.070 indicating a negative relationship between ego-resilience and spirituality. The  $p$  value is 0.598 which shows that it is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that 'There is a significant relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience' has been rejected. The review of literature conducted by the researcher shows two studies by Gnanprakash (2013) and Womble, Labbe and

Cochran (2013). These studies have shown that there is a relationship between spirituality and resilience. These studies have been conducted on a different sample- students, which is different from the sample of the current study.

People believe they are spiritual when they feel a connectedness to the transcendent. People find this connection through religion or through other aspects which is not directly connected to religion. Everyone who is religious may not be spiritual. There are people who blindly follow what their religion has asked them to do. They may go to places of worship, perform the required duties and yet not have connectedness. Religiosity is an integral aspect of most people. Prayer forms an important part in everyone's life.

Indian culture has taught the individuals that prayer or spiritual beliefs is a part of their daily routine. As prayer is an integral part of everyone's lifestyle it does not play any special role in dealing with a stressful situation. People's belief about the divine plays an important role in the type of belief system that they have formed. It may be displayed in their moral life and moral beliefs and not in their ability to deal with a stressful or a unique situation. As spirituality serves a different purpose other than dealing with a stressful situation there is no relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.

People have adopted a fast moving life. They spend most of their time at work. As the work demands increase, the time spent for other activities reduces. People do not get time to reflect on their religious and spiritual beliefs. They do not experience connectedness with the divine or the transcendent. The inner peace, positive feelings and awe rendered by the feelings of spirituality is lost out in a fast moving life. The ability to effectively overcome a stressful situation that is got from such feelings is unable to play a significant role in the lives of the people. As there is no connection with the divine there cannot be a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience. Hence H1: 'There is a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience' is rejected.

**Section 4.II.B:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 2 which states that 'There is a relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience'. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 4.3: Showing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation results between ego-resilience and locus of control –**

Locus of Control	r value	Significance
Powerful Others and Ego- Resilience	-0.077	0.558 <sup>n.s</sup>
Chance Control and Ego- Resilience	-0.171	0.192 <sup>n.s</sup>
Individual Control and Ego- Resilience	0.195	0.136 <sup>n.s</sup>

<sup>n.s</sup> – Not Significant



Table 4.3 shows Pearson Correlation value between powerful others and ego-resilience is -0.077, which indicates a negative relationship. The Pearson Correlation value between chance control and ego-resilience is -0.171, which indicates a negative relationship. The Pearson Correlation value between individual control and ego-resilience is 0.195, which indicates a positive relationship. The significance value is powerful others is 0.558, 0.192 for chance control and 0.136 for individual control. It can be seen that the  $p$  values are not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that ‘There is a significant relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience’ has been rejected.

As per literature review, the study conducted by Baron, Eisman, Scuello and Veyzar (1996) found that there was no difference in locus of control between those who experienced the traumatic situation and those who did not experience the traumatic situation. This study has shown that locus of control is not a determiner for the level of stress experienced. As it is not related to the level of stress experienced it does not have a relationship with ego-resilience.

Locus of control determines the belief held by people regarding the controlling agent. People may believe that powerful others such as God, family members or others may control the happenings in one’s life. People may believe in luck, fate, destiny, karma, impact of one’s deeds in past life or astrology as controllers of one’s life. Other people believe that it is they themselves who control everything in their life. Locus of control governs one’s belief situation and has become a part of the individual. Locus of control is a common entity of all and not unique to only a few people and hence does not have a relationship with ego-resilience.

Hence H2: ‘There is a relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience’ is rejected.

**Section 4.II.C:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 3 which states that ‘There is a relationship between positive affect and ego-resilience’. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 4.4: Showing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation results between positive affect and ego-resilience-**

Affect	r value	Significance
Positive Affect and Ego- Resilience	0.331	0.010 <sup>**</sup>
Negative Affect and Ego- Resilience	-0.321	0.012 <sup>*</sup>

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

<sup>\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4.4 shows Pearson Correlation value between positive affect and ego-resilience is 0.331, which indicates a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for positive affect is 0.010

which is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore the hypothesis which states that ‘There is a significant relationship between positive affect and ego-resilience’ has been accepted. For further investigation negative affect has also been considered. The Pearson Correlation value between negative affect and ego-resilience is -0.321, which indicates a negative relationship. A very weak negative correlation indicates that as one factor increases the other one will decrease but this will not happen proportionately. The  $p$  value is 0.012 which is significant at 0.05 level indicating that there is a relationship between negative affect and ego-resilience.

Review of literature shows studies conducted by Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) and Tugade, Fredrickson and Barrett (2004) which found that positive emotions play an important role in resilience. Positive affect play a very important role in dealing with stress. Positive affect leads to positive thinking. When a person has a positive thinking they can derive positive meaning in their life. Positive affect helps a person have a positive appraisal of the stressful event and deal with it accordingly.

Positive affect play a very important role by reducing the effect of negative affect. When there is a stressful event a person can be overwhelmed by negative emotions. When the person makes use of positive emotions, the effect of negative emotions is negated. The use of positive affect helps the person focus on the required task. When in a stressful situation, a person is required to come up with strategies which will help them deal with the stress. When the person makes use of positive emotions the person is able to stay calm and make the required decisions and the come up with methods to deal with the problem effectively.

It can be seen from the table that negative affect has a negative relationship with ego-resilience. A setback or a traumatic event causes a number of negative affect. A person may boggle down under the impact of the negative emotions associated with the stress. This reduces the capacity of the individual to deal effectively with the stressful event. Negative emotions can affect a person’s health and well-being which can further the level of stress experienced. Negative emotions can affect the person’s thinking, problem solving and decision making processes. Due to this the person will be unable to make the correct decisions which can help them overcome the stressful event. A person who uses negative emotions may get caught in the past. This reduces their ability to bounce back after the passing of the stressful event.

Hence H3: ‘There is a relationship between positive affect and ego-resilience’ is accepted.

**Section 4.II.D:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 4 which states that ‘There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience’. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 4.5: Showing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation results between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience-**

Emotional Intelligence	r value	Significance
Perception of Emotion and Ego-Resilience	0.205	0.116 <sup>n.s</sup>
Managing Own Emotion and Ego-Resilience	0.122	0.352 <sup>n.s</sup>
Managing Others Emotion and Ego-Resilience	0.175	0.181 <sup>n.s</sup>
Utilization of Emotion and Ego-Resilience	0.052	0.693 <sup>n.s</sup>
Total Emotional Intelligence and Ego-Resilience	0.192	0.142 <sup>n.s</sup>

<sup>n.s</sup> - Not Significant

Table 4.5 shows Pearson Correlation value between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience is 0.192, which indicates a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for emotional intelligence is 0.142 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that ‘There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience’ has been rejected. For further investigation the subscales of emotional intelligence are also considered. The Pearson Correlation value between perception of emotions and ego-resilience is 0.205 which indicates it has a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for managing own emotions subscale 0.116 which is not significant at 0.05 level. The Pearson Correlation value between managing own emotions and ego-resilience is 0.122 which indicates it has a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value is 0.352 for managing own emotions subscale which is not significant at 0.05 level. The Pearson Correlation value between managing others emotions and ego-resilience is 0.175 which indicates it has a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for managing own emotions subscale is 0.181 which is not significant at 0.05 level. The Pearson Correlation value between utilization of emotions and ego-resilience is 0.052 which indicates it has a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for utilization of emotions subscale is 0.693 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore these factors do not contribute to ego-resilience.

Literature review conducted by the researcher shows a study conducted by Schneider, Lyons and Khazon (2013). This study was conducted on a population different from the present study and hence the current study has shown different results. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in interactions between people. Emotional intelligence is required when individuals are dealing with other people as it requires understanding others emotions, making use of one’s emotions, controlling emotions as needed. As emotional intelligence is required in effective interactions it is not related to ego-resilience.

Hence H4: ‘There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience’ is rejected.

**Section 4.II.E:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 5 which states that ‘There is a relationship between optimism and ego-resilience’. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 4.6:** Showing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation results between optimism and ego-resilience-

Optimism scale	r value	Significance
Permanent Bad and Ego-Resilience	-0.139	0.290
Permanent Good and Ego-Resilience	0.088	0.503
Pervasiveness Bad and Ego-Resilience	-0.240	-0.065
Pervasiveness Good and Ego-Resilience	-0.007	0.956
Personalization Bad and Ego-Resilience	0.59	0.653
Personalization Good and Ego-Resilience	0.291	0.024*
Total Optimism Score and Ego-Resilience	0.320	0.013*

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4.6 shows Pearson Correlation value between optimism and ego-resilience is 0.320, which indicates a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for optimism is 0.013 which is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the hypothesis which states that ‘There is a significant relationship between optimism and ego-resilience’ has been accepted.

For further investigation, the subscales of the Learned Optimism scale has been taken into consideration.

Permanence measures the belief of the duration of the event. When pessimists experience a stressful event they believe it to be permanent and optimists as temporary. It can be seen from the table that the Pearson Correlation value between permanent bad and ego-resilience is -0.139, which indicates a negative relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for permanent bad is 0.290 which is not significant at the 0.05 level. The Pearson Correlation value between permanent good and ego-resilience is 0.088, which indicates a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for permanent good 0.503 which is not significant at 0.05 level.

Pervasiveness measures the ability of a person to compartmentalize the problems or have influences of it in other aspects. Optimists would refer to problems as specific and compartmentalize while pessimists may have a universality to their problems. The Pearson

Correlation value between pervasiveness bad and ego-resilience is -0.240, which indicates a negative relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for pervasiveness bad is -0.065 which is not significant at 0.05 level. The Pearson Correlation value between pervasiveness good and ego-resilience is -0.007, which indicates a negative relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for pervasiveness good is 0.956 which is not significant at 0.05 level.

Personalization measures whether we internalize or externalize problems. The Pearson Correlation value between personalization bad and ego-resilience is 0.59, which indicates a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for personalization bad is 0.653 which is not significant at 0.05 level. The Pearson Correlation value between personalization good and ego-resilience is 0.291, which indicates a positive relationship. It can be seen that the  $p$  value for personalization good is 0.024 which is significant at 0.05 level.

A study was conducted by Deist and Greeff (2015) which shows that optimism plays an important role in resilience. Optimism plays an important role in building resources. Resources in turn help in dealing with a stressful situation. Scheier and Carver (1992) suggest that dispositional optimism causes one to believe that the future will bring abundant good things. Such a belief will help an individual to overcome the present stress as they believe that in future they would not face this challenge. Optimists believe that they are capable of reaching their goals which can include their goal of overcoming the present stressful situation. As they believe in their capacity they are able to overcome from the adverse situation well and bounce back.

Personalization good refers to how optimistic people externalize the blame of the stressful situation. They do not indulge in blaming themselves for the bad situation. Their self-esteem does not reduce as they believe that an external agent is responsible for the stress and this in turn increases their optimism and helps in resilience.

Hence H5: 'There is a relationship between optimism and ego-resilience' is accepted.

**Section 4.II.F:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 6 which states that 'Spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predicts ego-resilience'.

As the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test has shown that positive affect, negative affect and optimism has a significant relationship with ego-resilience, a regression analysis has been done to find out the model summary.

Regression Analysis is a statistical tool which helps in determining the type of relationship that exists between two variables. It can help predict if one variable is causing the other. It helps in formulating a mathematical model which shows the relationship between the two variables and

therefore helping in forming predictions if the dependent variable is caused by the independent variable.

**Table 4.7: Showing the Multiple Regression Analysis results between positive affect, negative affect and optimism and ego-resilience-**

DV = Ego Resilience	$\beta$	t	F	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Positive Affect	0.285	2.434*	7.725**	0.293	0.255
Negative Affect	-0.262	2.236*			
Optimism	0.357	3.167**			

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01

Table 4.7 shows that positive affect, negative affect and optimism are the predictor variables of ego-resilience. The beta ( $\beta$ ) value shows standardized coefficient values. The coefficient value of positive affect is 0.285 which shows that there is a positive relationship between positive affect and ego-resilience. The coefficient value of negative affect is -0.262 which shows that there is a negative relationship between negative affect and ego-resilience. The coefficient value of optimism is 0.357 which shows that there is a positive relationship between optimism and ego-resilience. It can be seen that 'F' value is 7.725 which is significant 0.01 level. This shows that the model can be seen as fit at 99% confidence interval. 'R<sup>2</sup>' is the coefficient of determination. This shows the strength of the model. It can be seen that the R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.293 which shows that the model strength is 29.3%. From this it can be inferred that positive affect, negative affect and optimism determines the level of ego-resilience 29.3% of the time.

As seen in the literature review and as shown by the regression analysis, positive affect and optimism helps in improving ego-resilience. Positive affect and optimism helps in increasing the level of confidence experienced by the individual. As the level of confidence increases, self-esteem increases which helps in dealing with the stress effectively. Positive affect and optimism are resource builders. Positive affect and optimism also help the individual make appropriate use of the available resources in dealing with the problem. Having an optimistic attitude and making use of positive affect can help one to resist the effects produced by the stress. Having a positive outlook towards the problem can help one overcome it faster. It can positively affect the type of decisions made and thinking patterns adopted during a stressful event.

Negative affect predicts ego-resilience negatively. This shows that the lower the level of negative affect the higher the level of ego-resilience. When a person is able to reduce the levels of negative emotions experienced during the stressful event, the individual would be better able to cope with the stressful event. The person can make use of positive emotions to reduce the effect of negative emotions which in turn will help in bouncing back from stress. Even when experiencing a novel or new situation, if the person makes use of negative emotions life anxiety

and fear, the individual will not be able to deal with it effectively. While on the other side, if the person uses positive emotions and stays calm, the individual would be in a better position to make correct decisions and hence overcome the situation effectively.

Hence H6 : The hypothesis which states that ‘Spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predicts ego-resilience’ has been accepted for positive emotions and optimism. It has been rejected for spirituality, locus of control and emotional intelligence.

**Section 4.II.G:** This section deals with the testing of Hypothesis 7 which states that ‘There is gender difference in ego-resilience’. Independent Sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis.

Independent sample t-test is statistical technique which determines the difference between two independent groups. The mean scores of both the groups are analysed and found if they are different or equal.

**Table 4.8:** Showing mean and standard deviation of the sample and the Independent sample t-test score

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation
Men	42.63	5.468
Women	41.03	6.043
<b>t-value</b>	1.075	
<b>Significance</b>	0.287 <sup>n.s</sup>	

n.s – Not Significant

Table 4.8 shows the mean and standard deviation of the group. It can be seen that the mean score of men is 42.63 and the score of women is 41.03. Men have got a standard deviation of 5.468 and women have got a standard deviation of 6.043. Men have obtained a slightly higher mean score in ego-resilience.

The table also shows the t-test value. The difference between males and females in ego-resilience is shown by the t value which is 1.075. The significance value is 0.287 which is greater than 0.05 significance value. This indicates that the two group do not differ in their level of ego-resilience. Thus, the hypothesis which states that ‘There is no gender difference in ego-resilience’ has been accepted.

Men and women are able to deal with the stressful situation effectively. They are able to make use of the resources available to them in an efficient manner which shows that they do not differ in their ability to bounce back from a stressful situation. There are no gender specific qualities which contribute to ego-resilience.

Hence H7: ‘There is gender difference in ego-resilience’ is rejected.

**Section 4.II.H:** This section deals with Objective 7 ‘To study the factors contributing to ego-resilience’. Thematic and content analysis was used to find out the underlying themes. 10 subjects- 5 men and 5 women who got high ego-resilience score was approached for this study. Thematic Analysis is a form of decoding the themes and patterns that are present in any form of qualitative data. Content Analysis involves analyzing the content of the data and usually depicting them in forms of graphs or figures.

*Six questions were taken into consideration for analysis.*

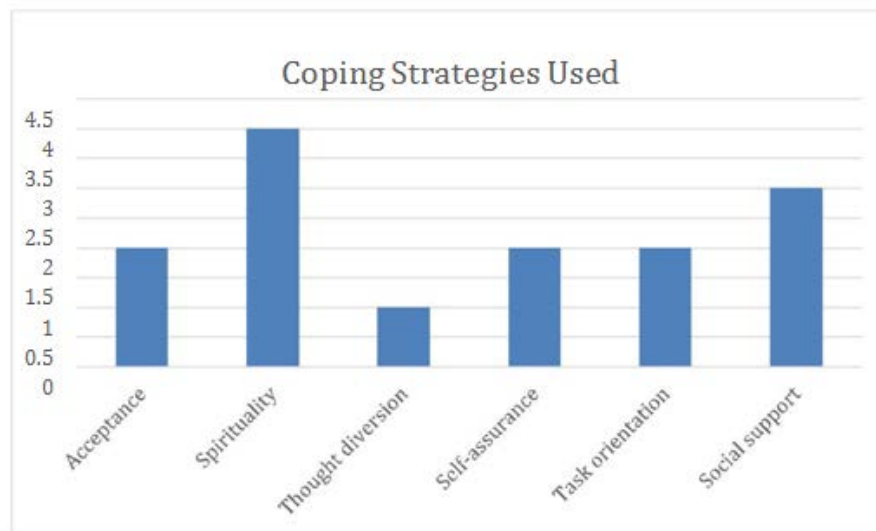
1. Coping strategies used:

The themes that have emerged are

- Acceptance
- Spirituality
- Thought diversion
- Self-assurance
- Task orientation
- Social support

As quoted by the respondent:

“Accepting the reality, engaging in activities like gardening, cooking” “Just pray to God Almighty because he is the controller of the universe”



**Graph 4.1:** Showing the coping strategies used by the respondents



Graph 4.1 shows the coping strategies used by the respondents when they face a threatening, traumatic situation or a setback. The coping strategies adopted have been represented on the X-axis and the number of people who have undertaken the respective strategy have been represented on the Y-axis. From the graph it can be seen that 4 people have stated that they believe in God and his ability to help them during a stressful situation. 3 people have mentioned that they rely on the support given by others like family members or friends to help them cope with the stress. 2 people have stated that they accept the situation that it is part of life and one must cope with the situation. 2 people have stated that they assure themselves that the situation would get better and they would be able to deal with it effectively. 1 person has mentioned about adopting activities that would divert thoughts from the current situation. 2 people have mentioned about adopting a practical approach to the situation and exploring alternatives that can help deal with the stressful situation as the strategies they have adopted.

It can be seen that it is spirituality and social support that has been perceived as the common strategies that have been used by the respondents. Thematic and Content analysis has shown that spirituality contributes to ego-resilience whereas the correlation analysis has shown that there is no relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience. The questionnaire tries to assess the level of connectedness that people have with the divine and their level of moral beliefs. With reference to coping strategies they have used, the respondents have mentioned about their religious beliefs that has helped them and which they have made use of. Though they indulge in religious activities they have not been able to develop a sense of connectedness with the divine.

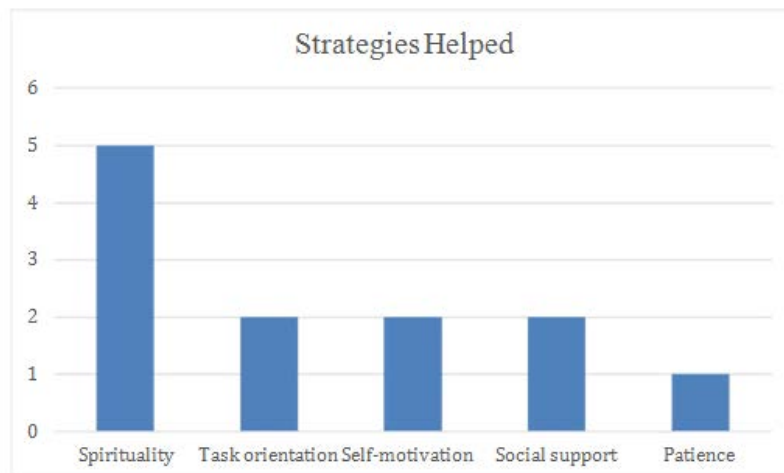
2. Strategies that has helped  
The themes that have emerged are

- Spirituality
- Task orientation
- Self-motivation
- Social Support
- Patience

As quoted by the respondent:

“If the situation happens, by thinking patiently, I believe we can overcome”

“Only prayers and our belief with God we felt that God will save us from this situation”



**Graph 4.2: Showing the coping strategies that has helped**

Graph 4.2 shows the coping strategies that have helped the respondents deal with the stress. The coping strategies that has helped them has been represented on the X-axis and the number of people who have stated that these strategies has helped them has been represented on the Y-axis. From the graph, it can be seen that 5 people have stated it is their belief in God and that God would help them that has helped them deal with the stressful situation they faced. 2 people each have stated that self-motivation that they can deal with the situation and dependence on others that they can help them overcome the situation has helped the respondents deal with the stressful situation. 2 people has stated that it is their hard work, exploring the various available options that can be a solution to the problem and patience that has helped them deal with this situation. It can be seen that it is the belief in God that has helped the respondents the most to deal with the stressful situation.

### 3. Best coping strategies:

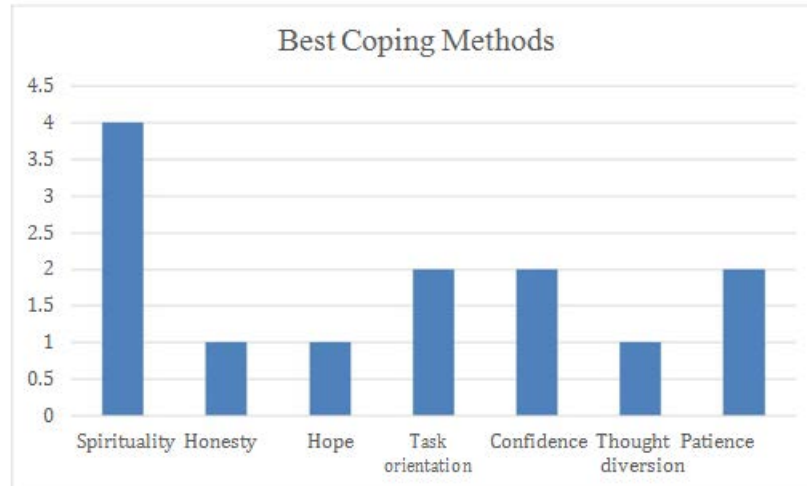
The themes that have emerged are

- Spirituality
- Honesty
- Hope
- Task orientation
- Confidence
- Thought diversion
- Patience

As quoted by the respondent:

“To engage in activities which will make you feel happy”

“Faith in God, because we know He is in control, actively trusting yourself to do well even in a lesser alternative”



***Graph 4.3: Showing the best coping strategies***

Graph 4.3: Showing the best coping strategies a Graph 4.3 shows the coping strategies that the respondents feel are the best methods to adopt during a stressful situation. The various strategies has been represented on the X-axis and the number of people who have stated those options has been represented on the Y-axis. From the graph it can be seen that 4 respondents have suggested that it is belief in God that can be most helpful in a stressful situation. 2 subjects have stated that is being confident and being patient that can help a person deal well in a stressful situation. 1 person each has suggested that it is being honest and not losing hope would help. Task orientation referring to structured and analytical thinking, focusing on the situation and diverting thoughts from the particular situation that can help one deal with a stressor. 2 respondents have reported in this manner.

It can be seen that it is belief in God that the respondents feel is the best coping strategy that can be employed while facing an adverse situation.

#### 4. Social support

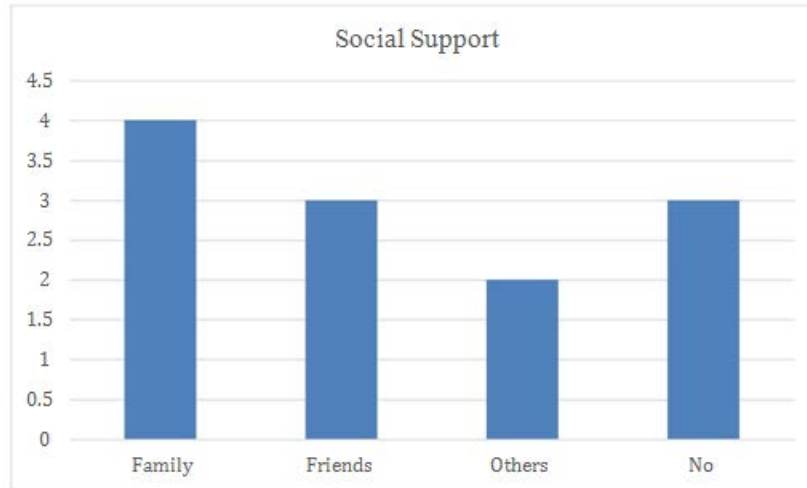
The themes that have emerged are

- Family
- Friends
- Others

As quoted by the respondent:

“I feel the support which I got from my brother-in-law helped me a lot because we used to discuss the situation. The sharing of ideas helped me a lot, In addition to giving me valuable suggestions he himself took a lot of initiative for smooth functioning of the marriage”

“At that time two police men accompanied her till hospital”



***Graph 4.4: Showing the role of social support***

Graph 4.4 shows the role that social support plays in dealing with a stressful situation. The type of social support has been represented on the X-axis and the number of people who have stated that it has helped them has been represented on the Y-axis. From the graph it can be seen that 4 people have experienced help from their family members. 3 people have felt that their friends have given them support. 2 people have stated that others have helped. 3 people have stated that social support has not helped them deal effectively with the stressful situation.

It can be seen that social support has helped only a few while it hasn't played an important role for others to deal with the situation. For those who claim it has helped it their family which has provided support. The respondents have mentioned that social support is a strategy that they have adopted in a threatening situation. The subjects may have been depended on others yet not received enough help that could help them to overcome or deal with their stressful situation.

#### 5. Thoughts experienced

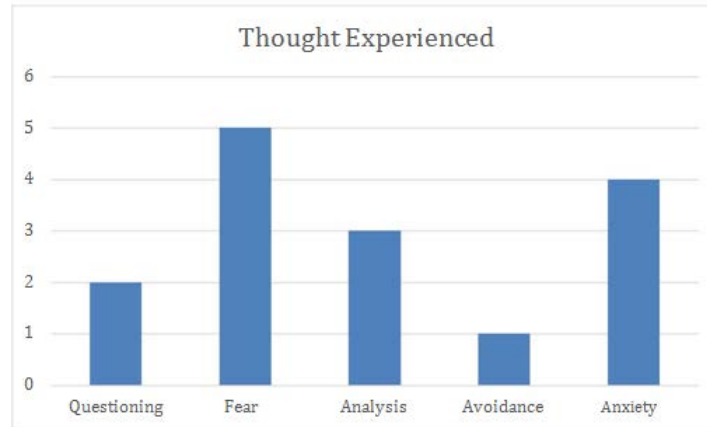
The themes that have emerged are

- Questioning
- Fear
- Analysis
- Avoidance
- Anxiety

As quoted by the respondent:

“Fright or flight”

“Fear of failure, feeling of being alone and darkness around you”



***Graph 4.5: Showing the thoughts experienced***

Graph 4.5 shows the various thoughts that the respondents have experienced when they go through a stressful situation. The various thought process has been represented on the X-axis and the number of people who have experienced it has been represented on the Y-axis. From the graph it can be seen that fear has been experienced by 5 people. 3 people have analysed the situation to come up with solutions. 2 people question on how to deal with the situation and the purpose of why they have been affected by the stress. 1 person has experienced the urge to avoid thoughts of fleeing from the situation. 4 people have experienced anxiety through concern about family members and their safety during the stressful situation, concern about being a disgrace in the society, being helpless and feeling blank and having no options to deal with the stressful situation.

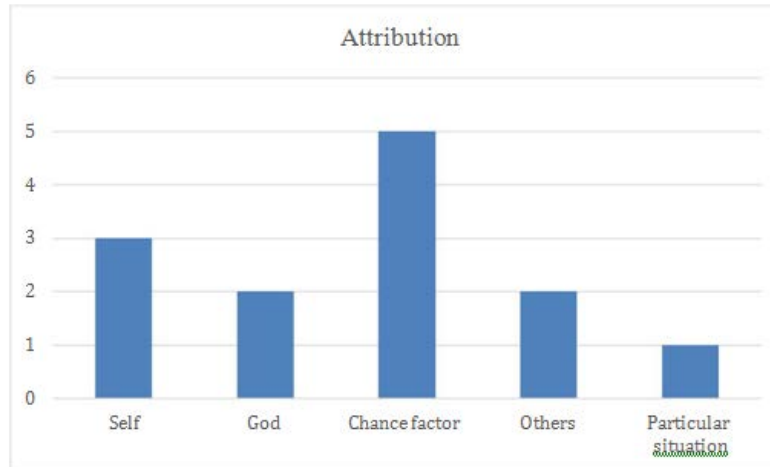
It can be seen that fear is the most common thought that people experience when they face a stressful situation.

6. Attribution

- Self
- God
- Chance factor
- Others
- Particular situation As quoted by the respondent:

“To the situation, which was unfortunate. That a running manufacturing unit was closed without thing about 100 odd failures supported by it”

“What’s meant to be shall be”



**Graph 4.6: Showing to whom the situation is attributed**

Graph 4.6 shows to whom the respondents attribute the cause of the stressful situation. 5 respondents have stated that they attribute the presence of the stressor to chance factors like luck, fate and destiny. 3 respondents have stated they attribute the stressful situation to themselves and the mistakes they have made. 2 respondents each have stated they would attribute the situation to God or other people. 1 person has stated that the stressor would be attributed to that particular situation.

It can be seen that most of the respondents have attributed the stressful situation to chance factors like luck, destiny and fate.

From the thematic and content analysis that has been undertaken, it is the theme of spirituality which has been recurrent. From this analysis, the factor which can be seen as helping to contribute to resilience is Religious beliefs and Spirituality. As mentioned, the qualitative data analysis has produced a contradictory result to the quantitative data analysis. This can be attributed to the use of religious beliefs and customs and not to the level of connectedness experienced with the transcendent.

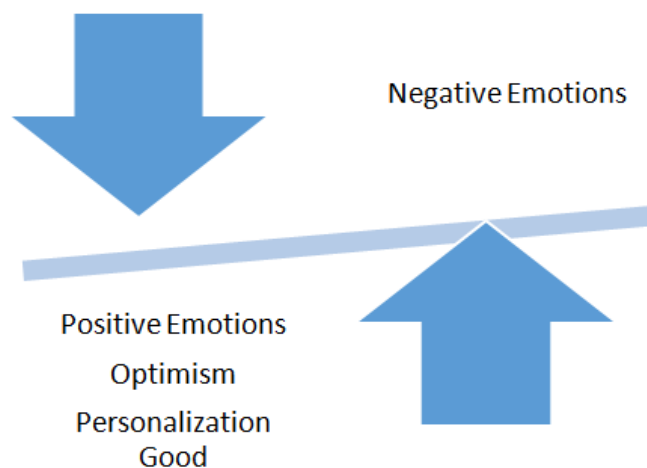
### **Training Module**

Based on the results of this study a training module can be developed. The factors that were seen contributing to ego-resilience were positive emotions and optimism. The most important requirement to deal with a stressful situation is to keep oneself calm and not be tensed. Positive emotions help one to reduce the use of negative thoughts which hinders the adapting process. To overcome a stressful situation one needs to anticipate a future that would be smooth. Having hope can also help a person deal with a stressful situation. This is provided by optimism.

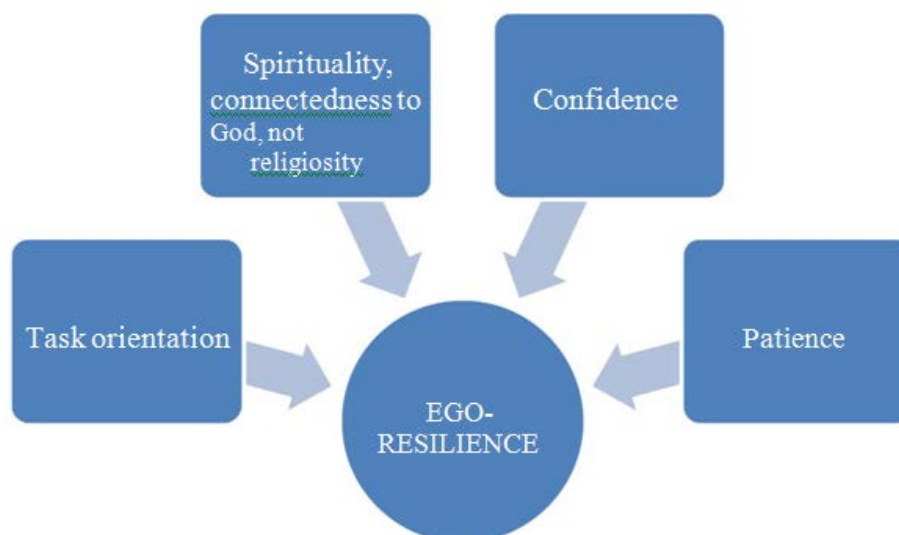
The qualitative analysis has shown that the themes that should be considered when developing the training module are- Spirituality, connectedness to God not religiosity, Task orientation, Confidence and Patience. Connectedness can help one to develop positive thinking. Task

orientation helps a person to focus on the task at hand and try to overcome the stressful situation. Confidence and patience helps one focus on the task and in turn help to overcome the threat. The training module can include methods which can help one to reduce the use of negative emotions. Techniques which emphasize on positive emotions and optimism can be inculcated. Positive thinking is the main determinant of ego-resilience. A person can be trained to control his thoughts in such a way that it emphasized on positive thinking which can be developed through the use of positive emotions and being optimistic.

Themes to be highlighted in the training module derived through quantitative analysis



Themes to be highlighted in the training module derived through qualitative analysis



## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The current study is titled 'The contributing factors to Ego-Resilience: A correlational study among the middle aged adults'. The study was conducted to find out the factors that enable people to deal with a stressful situation effectively. The study was conducted on 30 men and 30 women who are aged 35-55. They were tested through two phases- a quantitative and a qualitative phase.

*The hypotheses set for the above objectives are-*

- (i) There is a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.
- (ii) There is a relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience .
- (iii) There is a relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience.
- (iv) There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience.
- (v) There is a relationship between optimism and ego-resilience.
- (vi) Spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predicts ego-resilience.
- (vii) There is gender difference in ego resilience.

The summary and following conclusions can be reached for the current study-

- The number of men and women who participated in this study are 50 and 50 respectively. Hence, the percentage is 50% for both gender. The respondents who took part in this study were in the age range of 35-55. Most of the respondents have two children. The percentage of respondents who have two children is 65%. Most of the respondents are employees. The percentage of employees in the sample is 48.3%. Most of the respondents do not face any health issues. The percentage of respondents who do not have any health issues is 61.5%.
- Hypothesis 1 which states that 'There is a relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience' has been rejected. Person Product Moment Correlation value for spirituality and ego-resilience is -0.070. This value is not significant. This means there is no relationship between spirituality and ego-resilience.
- Hypothesis 2 which states that 'There is a significant relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience' has been rejected. Person Product Moment Correlation value for locus of control and ego-resilience, powerful others- - 0.077, chance control- - 0.171 and individual control- 0.195. These values are not significant. This means there is no relationship between locus of control and ego-resilience.
- Hypothesis 3 which states that 'There is a significant relationship between positive affect and ego-resilience' has been accepted. Pearson Product Moment Correlation value for positive affect and ego-resilience is 0.331. It is significant at 0.01 level. Pearson Product Moment Correlation value for negative affect and ego-resilience is -0.321 . It is



significant at 0.05 level. This means there is relationship between positive emotions and ego-resilience. Negative affect has a negative relationship with ego-resilience.

- Hypothesis 4 which states that ‘There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-resilience’ has been rejected. Pearson Product Moment Correlation value for emotional intelligence and ego-resilience is 0.192. The correlation values for the dimensions: perception of emotion-0.205, managing own emotion- 0.122, managing others emotion- 0.175 and utilization of emotion- 0.052. It is not significant. This means there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and ego- resilience.
- Hypothesis 5 which states that ‘There is a significant relationship between optimism and ego-resilience’ has been accepted. Pearson Product Moment Correlation value for optimism and ego-resilience is 0.320. It is significant at 0.05 level. The correlation values for the dimensions: permanent bad- -0.139, permanent good- 0.088, pervasiveness bad- - 0.240, pervasiveness good- - 0.007, personalization bad- 0.59 and personalization good- 0.291. Personalization good correlation value is significant at 0.05 level. This means there is relationship between optimism and ego-resilience.
- Hypothesis 6 which states that ‘Spirituality, locus of control, positive emotions, emotional intelligence and optimism predicts ego-resilience’ has been accepted for positive emotions and optimism and rejected for spirituality, locus of control and emotional intelligence. Regression Analysis shows that the model strength is 29.3% of the time. Positive affect, negative affect and optimism predict ego-resilience. The model is fit at 0.01 level of significance.
- Hypothesis 7 which states that ‘There is gender difference in ego-resilience’ has been rejected. Independent sample t-test value is 1.075. It is not significant.
- Thematic and content analysis shows that the commonly adopted strategy in a stressful situation is prayer and belief in God. Social support does not play a strong role in dealing with a stressful situation.
- A training module can be developed using the results of this study to build ego-resilience. The quantitative analysis has shown that positive emotions and optimism helps build coping resources. The qualitative analysis has shown that task-orientation, patience, confidence and connectedness to God not religiosity can help bounce back. These factors influence positive thinking. Therefore, positive thinking techniques can be introduced by developing the use of positive emotions and optimism.

## **CHAPTER 6: LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Limitations**

Given below are some of the limitations for the current study.

- The sample size was limited to 60. This was due to the lack of time. Hence, in future, a similar study needs to be conducted on a larger section of population.
- The sample was limited to only one Tier 1 city i.e. Bangalore city.
- The study was conducted only on the English literate category and not on the non-English rural category.
- Socially desirable answers may have affected the accuracy of the test scores.
- As the questionnaires given to the subjects were long the answers may have been influenced by fatigue and boredom.

### **6.2 Implications**

Given below are some of the important implications of the current study and also some implications regarding how this study can be taken forward.

- As there are limited amounts of studies done in the Indian context, this study will give further insights into the important factors which contribute to resilience.
- This study will act as a basis for those researchers who would like to conduct further studies in this area or similar areas.
- The study can further be taken to a larger sample and extended for further findings.
- A study can be conducted to compare ego-resilience across the life span.
- A study can be conducted on less educated population to understand their level of ego-resilience.
- This study will provide a large amount of data specific to the viewpoints of middle age with reference to their coping strategies.
- The study would help to develop the training programme based on factors contributing to ego-resilience.

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